

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# FBI bid to hurt Dr. King told

By WALLACE TURNER  
New York Times Service

A former FBI agent says that in the 1960s the bureau used material gained in an electronic surveillance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in an apparent effort to undermine the late civil rights leader's support among his white backers.

The former agent also said that many newsmen were urged to write articles disclosing intimate details of Dr. King's personal life — details to be supplied by the bureau after they were picked up in telephone taps. These taps on Dr. King were said to have been much more widespread than had previously been reported.

THE former agent, Arthur Murtagh, a 51-year-old lawyer now practicing in Constatle, N.Y., told the New York Times in an interview that important figures in the FBI even tried to persuade Atlanta community leaders that they could not attend a banquet that was held to honor Dr. King after he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

The persuasion was said to have included a warning that the bureau had derogatory information about Dr. King that might eventually embarrass those who attended the banquet.

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Murtagh retired from the Bureau in September 1971 after 21 years, including 11 years in the Atlanta office. His account to The Times has been confirmed in interviews with various independent sources.

The fact that Dr. King's telephone was tapped has been well-established. It was disclosed in 1968 while Sen. Robert F. Kennedy campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination.

After Kennedy's murder in June 1968 his former associates said that the tap was installed when Kennedy, as attorney general, acquiesced in 1963 to J. Edgar Hoover's repeated demands for authority to tap. Hoover had argued that Dr. King had associations with subversive groups who sought to use the civil rights movement against the best interests of the United States.

IN 1969, the tap on Dr. King was further described briefly in court hearings involving the draft violation conviction of Muhammad Ali, then the world heavyweight boxing champion.

These brief glimpses made it clear that the tap was instituted in October 1963, and was continued at least into 1965. There were suggestions that it lasted until 1968, when Dr. King was assassinated. The bureau has never given any information about the tap.